

# **THE JACOBS REPORT**

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## **SENATE SPLIT OVER GAY BENEFITS**

A divided Senate urged the Supreme Court to “take whatever steps necessary” to overturn a recent court decision that opened the door to benefits for domestic partners of gay state employees.

Two identical resolutions sponsored by Senator Alan Cropsey (R-DeWitt), SCR 0033 and SR 0068, were crafted in response to Ingham County Circuit Court Judge Joyce Draganchuk’s decision that the recently adopted anti-gay marriage constitutional amendment does not impact whether a public entity can benefit packages to homosexuals.

Sen.Cropsey argued that the higher courts need to review the case in question as quickly as possible. As introduced, his resolutions called on the Supreme Court to issue a restraining order against same-sex benefits. In an attempt to soften the rhetoric, Cropsey amended his wording, asking that the “status quo” of an Attorney General opinion on a similar matter be held to a higher value than the court decision.

“The status quo should be maintained until the final disposition of the court,” he said.

That argument didn’t fly with Senator Gilda Jacobs (D-Huntington Woods), whose district holds the largest gay population in the state.

“Is this what we want from a Supreme Court? To be responsible to the call of the Legislature?” Sen. Jacobs asked. “We’re asking the Supreme Court to respond to a request on a case that isn’t even before the Court at this time.

“The supporters of Proposal 2 went out of their way to convince voters that their ‘sanctity of marriage’ agenda was not to take away rights or benefits away from people. But that’s exactly what they are trying to do now.

“Homophobia is still a tool of division; however, the fact that we are having this debate today is an indication of just how far gay rights have advanced over the past ten years. Ten years ago, to think that any elected official would stand up for gay rights in the Michigan Legislature—well, that would be a stretch. It was too controversial, too risky, too unpopular. In some ways, that hasn’t changed, but in other ways, it has changed a lot.”

Jacobs expressed confidence that future generations will be more tolerant than their predecessors, citing a recent national survey published in Time magazine showing that 57% percent of college freshmen favor full-fledged legalization of same-sex marriage. “The continued evolution of gay rights in our society has inevitable momentum,” said Jacobs. “I have confidence that ten years from now, we will have a majority of elected officials in this body who can stand up and do the right thing and say, “Look at me. I’m an elected official and I can stand up here and serve my constituents whether they are gay or straight, and it doesn’t matter whether I am straight or gay.”

For Senator Jacobs' full floor statement, please visit her Michigan Senate homepage later this afternoon:  
<http://www.senate.mi.gov/jacobs/>.

## **HOME & RENTAL INSURANCE GUIDE NOW ONLINE**

The Office of Financial and Insurance Services (OFIS) recently announced that the 2005 Buyers' Guide to Home and Renters Insurance is available online at [http://www.michigan.gov/cis/0,1607,7-154-10555\\_13222\\_13224-52688--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/cis/0,1607,7-154-10555_13222_13224-52688--,00.html) and in hard copy.

"Consumers can often save hundreds of dollars by simply picking up the phone and comparing insurance rates," said OFIS Commissioner Linda Watters. "To make this process easier, consumers can use this guide as they shop for the best deal on home insurance."

The guide contains information and tips about purchasing homeowners and renters insurance. It also includes the results of an annual survey of insurers offering home, rental and condominium insurance in different areas of the state. This information provides consumers with information about rates charged by these insurers. It is an important part of the overall effort of the Granholm Administration to help protect and aid consumers.

OFIS constantly stresses that consumers shop around to receive the best price for home insurance. Consumers who renew insurance, or purchase insurance for the first time, should not assume that the first quote they receive is the best price they can get. Shopping around to many different insurance companies will allow them to choose the best available premium rate.

"Insurance rates can vary from company to company, so it's important to shop around," Watters said. "The 2005 Buyers' Guide to Home Insurance is a valuable tool for doing that effectively."

Another important resource for consumers is the interactive version of the buyers' guide, which also can be found on the OFIS website. It allows users to choose a profile that most closely fits their situation and location to get a general idea of rates for home insurance. The user can review sample rates for a select list of companies or review rates for all home insurance companies in Michigan.

Information on home insurance can be found on the OFIS homepage in the area entitled "Rising Homeowners Insurance Rates?"

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All Michigan legislation can be tracked at <http://www.legislature.michigan.gov/>.

State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Economic Development, Small Business & Regulatory Reform Committee. She also serves on the Government Operations and Health Policy Committees.

**Constituents of the 14<sup>th</sup> District may contact Senator Jacobs at [sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov) or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.**

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